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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 001732

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/06/2013

TAGS: PREL BO NL EUN

SUBJECT: DUTCH ON BELARUS DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 194808

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR MARY DALY FOR REASONS  
1.5 (B AND D).

(C) POLOFF MADE REFTEL POINTS TO DUTCH MFA DESK OFFICER FOR UKRAINE AND BELARUS DANIEL VINKELES MELCHERS ON JULY 7. VINKELES MELCHERS ADVISED THAT THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT SHARES U.S. CONCERNS AND IS PARTICULARLY FOCUSED ON A POSSIBLE REFERENDUM INTENDED TO EXTEND LUKASHENKO'S TERM IN OFFICE. THE GONL THINKS THAT THE EU SHOULD NOT ACCEPT SUCH A STEP. THE GONL BELIEVES THE TIME IS RIGHT TO TAKE A STRONG STAND ON BELARUS. VINKELES MELCHERS NOTED THAT BELARUS IS ON THE AGENDA OF THE PSC MEETING IN BRUSSELS ON JULY 8 AND THAT VISA AND ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ARE AMONG THE MEASURES TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE POLICY PAPER FOR THAT MEETING. THAT SAID, HE NOTED THAT AS CURRENT OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE THE NETHERLANDS MAY BE SOMEWHAT RESTRAINED IN VOICING ITS IDEAS TOO STRONGLY IN EU COUNCILS.

BAILY